NOTE XLI.

ON RHINOCEROS SIMUS, BURCHELL IN THE LEYDEN MUSEUM.

BY

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According to Dr. P. L. Sclater (Nature, September 25, 1890, p. 520) Mr. F. Selous says in the *Field* of August 16 as follows: — »it was within a mile of this spot that, two years previously (i. e. in 1883), I shot two white Rhinoceroses (*Rhinoceros simus*), the last of their kind that have been killed (and, perhaps, that *ever will be killed*) by an Englishman. They were male and female, and I preserved the skin of the head and the skull of the former for the South African Museum in Cape town, where they now are.... To the best of my belief, the great white or square-mouthed Rhinoceros, the largest of modern terrestrial mammals after the Elephant, is on the very verge of extinction, and in the next year or two will become absolutely extinct. If in the near future some student of natural history should wish to know what this extinct beast really was like, he will find nothing in all the Museums of Europe and America to enlighten him upon the subject, but some half-dozen skulls and a goodly number of the anterior horns."

After having pointed out the four striking characteristics by which the heads of *Rh. simus* and *Rh. bicornis* may be distinguished, Dr. Sclater concludes as follows: » I wish to call special attention to what Mr. Selous has already said — that no Museum in Europe or America possesses a specimen of this huge animal and to point out that the country, in which alone (as is possible but by no means certain) the last stragglers exist, being now within the British Empire, it is clearly our duty to endeavour to obtain and preserve examples of the great white or square-mouthed Rhinoceros for the use and information of posterity."

In P. Z. S. L. 1886, p. 144, Dr. Sclater wrote: »Indeed, as is well known, such specimens of the latter species (*Rh. simus*), with the exception of a single immature example in the British Museum, are almost unknown in Europe."

Mr. F. C. Selous published in 1890 a book entitled »A Hunter's wanderings in Africa" and in that book I find on p. 447 in *a list of game*, *shot between the* 1*st of January* 1877 *and the* 31*st December* 1880, that Selous has killed *two* white Rhinoceroses; therefore the named *two* animals are the *two* specimens mentioned in the *Field*, and consequently the year 1883 (see Nature l. c.) is not correct. Although Selous only has shot two white Rhinoceroses he however often has seen living specimens, so (A Hunter's wanderings, p. 60): »looking up I saw a white Rhinoceros cow"; l. c. p. 185: »on my return journey I saw a *good many* Rhinoceroses of both the black and white species"; l. c. p. 359: »on our way to the Hanyane we one day came upon *five* white Rhinoceroses"! and on p. 191: »*Rhinoceros simus* is still to be found between the Okavango and Cunene-rivers..... In 1878 and 1880 I still found the square-mouthed (or white) Rhinoceroses *fairly numerous* in a small tract of country in North-eastern Mashuna Land, between the Umniati and Hanyane rivers.... Their extermination in this portion of the country may therefore, I am afraid, be expected within a very few years, and *the square-mouthed Rhinoceros will then only exist in a few tracts of S. E. Africa*, *in the neighbourhood of the river Sabi!*"

I do not know the reason why Mr. Selous supposes in the *Field* that *at present* all those white Rhinoceroses will be extinct, but if he is right in this point, I think, that Mr. Selous, Dr. Sclater and every other friend of Nature, as well as the whole scientific world will hear with great excitement my assertion *that there are since more than* 40 *years in our Museum a beautifully stuffed adult female and since the year* 1879 *a flat skin of an adult specimen of Rhinoceros simus!* These huge animals have a short (not a prehensile) upper lip; an elongated ear-conch and the two margins of the ear-conch (in the flat skin the ears are in a very bad state) are united together for a great extent and form a closed cylinder which rises about 7 cm. (2 inches 8 lines) above the base; the nostrils are elongated in a direction parallel with the mouth; the eye is placed further back in the head than in *Rhinoceros bicornis*; the anterior horn (the flat skin is without horns) is not perfectly round; and the distance between anterior horn and margin of upperlip is very great. In conclusion, we possess a fine and complete stuffed specimen of the true *Rhinoceros simus*, and as there are perhaps (see Mr. Selous and Dr. Sclater) no other adult specimens in America nor Europe, I will give some measurements of this stuffed female in our Museum:

	Centimeters.
Length of head and body, from margin of upper lip to base of tail . . . . about	353
Length of head, from margin of upper lip to between the ears . . . . about	91
Length of tail without bristles	79
» » upperlip	28
» » ears	24
Distance between eye and ear	32.5
Height of anterior horn	47
» » posterior »	18
Circumference at base of anterior horn . . .	51
» » » » » posterior » . . .	42

Height at shoulders.	148
» » crupper	146.5
Circumference of the body	318

As to the name *white* Rhinoceros for our species, Mr. Selous, l. c. p. 192, remarks: »the white and black species both are of a sort of dark slate-colour; and so far from one being white and the other black, I should be sorry to state upon oath which was the darker of the two." Smith (Illustrations of the Zoology of South Africa) called the colour of *Rh. simus* pale broccoli-brown, of *Rh. bicornis* pale yellowish brown and of *Rh. keitloa* (perhaps = *bicornis*) pale brownish yellow.

Sir Samuel Baker (Wild Beasts and their Ways, 1890, Vol. II, p. 88) says that the great *Rhinoceros (Rh. simus)* is distinguished by its pale colour. A very acceptable suggestion has been made by Mr. W. Drummond (P. Z. S. L. 1876, p. 110): »the distinction of the black and white seems to me misleading and misapplied, all Rhinoceroses being of the same colour, namely a peculiar shade of brown or if any difference does exist, it being in *Rh. bicornis minor* possessing a tinge of red..... all such cases may be referred to outward circumstances, such as the position of the sun, or the kind of mud they may have been rolling in last, and partly, no doubt to the age and sex of the animal. I may mention that I have watched a bull of *Rh. simus* trotting past me in the full glare of the midday sun, and it has appeared to me almost white; while after following the same animal up and finding it feeding with the long shadows of evening on it, its colour has then seemed to be, as it really is, a deep brown."

The adult female in the Leyden Museum is labeled »de la partie intérieure de la Colonie du Cap." The flat skin is without locality and has been presented to our Museum in the year 1879 by his Excellency the Minister for the home department.

NB. There is another very interesting animal which formerly lived in South Africa in considerable abundance and now seems to be extinct. I mean the *Quagga*. We find in H. A. Bryden's *Kloof and Karroo in Cape Colony*, 1889, an article »on the extinction of the true Quagga (*Equus quagga*)". Bryden says that he fears that there is now no longer any reasonable doubt that the true Quagga — Quacha of the Hottentots — *Equus quagga* of Linnaeus — must be numbered in the increasing catalogue of extinct creatures! and he exclaims: »no human effort can now recall this magnificent form — it is gone for ever, after an existance of untold thousands of years upon its spacious plains!"

If the Quagga nearly or really is extinct, then I believe it more than time to look round in the Musea of Natural History and to register what has been preserved for future time: and I fear that our harvest will be rather poor! In the British Museum there is a stuffed animal, *in very bad state* (Handlist, a. s. o. 1873, p. 37). In Natura Artis Magistra at Amsterdam there too is a single stuffed specimen. In the Leyden Museum is a beautifully stuffed adult male, died in 1826 in confinement and received from the frontiers of the Cape-colony, and its skeleton. Dr. Möbius of Berlin writes me that in the Museum under his charge there are a stuffed female-specimen with its skull and backbones, a skeleton and a skull. I have no account about the other Musea of Natural History.